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Oahu Couple Reunites with Five Children, Honored During National Reunification Month

(HONOLULU, HAWAII, June 17, 2014)—In 1996, caught in substance abuse and serious family challenges, Vivian Kim-Seu lost her four daughters to Hawaii's foster care system for the majority of their childhoods. For more than a decade, she struggled to achieve sobriety, resisting staying clean, but knowing she needed to do so for her children.

During treatment, she was in a relationship with her future husband, Randy Kim-Seu, Jr., who addressed his own substance abuse in order to be with Vivian and help her raise her children.

A little more than a year ago, the couple graduated from the Family Drug Court Program and were successfully reunited with Vivian Kim-Seu's children. They have since married and welcomed to the family a child of their own.

In honor of National Reunification Month, the Hawaii State Department of Human Services (DHS) and Hawaii State Judiciary Family Drug Court is celebrating the Kim-Seu family's journey.

There are approximately 1,200 children in Hawaii's foster care system. Children are typically separated from their families as a result of abuse, drugs or neglect. A child's average stay in a "resource home," or with a foster family, is 18 months. According to DHS, an estimated 67 percent of children are reunited with their parents. The Kim-Seu's are one such example.

On June 20 a luncheon will honor the Kim-Seu's and their team of supporters—Family Court Drug Program and DHS' Child Welfare Services (CWS) on Oahu—as well as the individuals and community partners—including social workers, resource caregivers, judiciary representatives, social service providers—that strengthen and support families working to reunite with their children.

The Kim-Seu's hope their experience inspires other families, particularly those going through the recovery process, that it is possible to confront and resolve issues that led to their separation, and to reunify with their children.

The Kim-Seu's live in Honolulu, raising five children between the ages of seven and 17; they also have an adult child who is 21. Randy Kim-Seu Jr. currently works as a laborer/construction worker and Vivian Kim-Seu works part-time at Palolo Housing where the family resides.

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Media Note: Photo of Kim-Seu family attached. Back row L-R: Vivian, Savannah and Randy; front row L-R: Anthony, Angel, Josephine and Devin.